

SYN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AGN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

MARCH 23, 2004

The importance of nurses to the delivery of high quality medical care is universally recognized among providers and consumers of health care services. The availability of a skilled workforce of nurses is important to the successful performance of health services in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

The central role played by nurses is embedded within licensing and accreditation standards for health care facilities and is underscored by recent legislative mandates concerning nurse-to-patient ratios among medical institutions.

The importance of our nurses to the health care delivery system is self-evident, and their critical role has been highlighted in the Department of Health Services' (DHS) recent crises and challenges. Quality nursing is a pre-condition to the maintenance of high quality health care and achievement of our strategic plan for county health services.

Recent events in the DHS have once again demonstrated that the county's management and supervision of our nursing workforce needs strengthening.

Specifically, there is a need for centralized, professional leadership and administrative

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oversight of nursing issues in DHS. Currently, matters affecting nursing care are scattered among the general local facility administrators and the Chief Medical Officer of the Department. There is no one designated to oversee nursing care on a system-wide basis.

A new position of Director of Nursing Care should be created in DHS. The Director would be responsible for representing the Director of Health Services on matters related to the role of nurses within the Department. These would include but not be limited to the maintenance of performance standards, recruitment and retention of nursing staff, training and staff development, and monitoring workload performance.

The establishment of such a position would assure a clearly identified point of responsibility for the management of key strategies affecting nursing care throughout the Department of Health Services.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of Health Services to create the position of Director of Nursing Care in the Department of Health Services. This new position and a modest but appropriate support staff should be incorporated within the Department's budget request for FY 04-05 for Board consideration during budget deliberations.